

# BELLY DANCE HABITS QUIZ

Thank you for taking part in the quiz.  
Here are your personalized results.

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## BECOME A DILIGENT PRACTITIONER

Strengthen your technique foundation

You are definitely in love with belly dance, and your passion and excitement are without a question. But it looks like you are trying to skip some important foundations. You may not have a problem scheduling and showing up for your dance practice, but drilling technique is super boring for you. You can't make yourself do it on a consistent basis unless it's a teacher who forces you to do it during the class. Hence, you work on a variety of choreographies which is exciting, and gives you some results, but you know that your progress will boom exponentially once you add the practice of simply drilling technique.

You need to shift your mindset about polishing technique and doing repetitive exercises. That doesn't mean that you don't need to work on other aspects such as adding more consistent practice, developing creative skills, or deepening history knowledge. It just means that right now your main blocking issue is reevaluating what exactly you need to focus on during your practice time.

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First, let's deal with your mindset:

- **Let's clarify first. What does it mean to work on your technique?**

Basically it's about developing muscle memory, so that every time your brain signals your body to do a specific movement, you perform it in the best way possible without analyzing movements again and again. So it's a muscle habit to do certain moves in a specific way. It's not about the sequence of movements in a dance routine, it's about their *quality*. This sounds obvious, right? But the frequent mistake is that dancers work on body memory only for the mechanics of a new movement, or a sequence in a choreo. They forget about QUALITY. That's what often differentiates professional dancers from amateurs.



- **Proper technique is preparation for your dance adventures.** Dance training is just like life... You may be in love with your job, but really hate checking and replying to emails. You may be thrilled traveling, but hate booking tickets and planning logistics, etc. Dance is just like that. You may be excited about learning and performing choreographies, but hate drilling technique. But guess what? The first doesn't happen without the second. You can't travel anywhere unless you figured out your tickets. And it's the same with dance... You can't have a nice performance without proper technique. And proper technique includes deliberate and focused work, and often a bunch of conditioning exercises to prepare your body. **So start thinking about the time you spend on drilling your technique, as an equivalent of planning logistics for an upcoming exciting trip.** It's not just an important, but absolutely necessary part of the process.



- **Never think you are above the basic technique,** or that you are too advanced to drill each movement again and again. That's your ticket to a successful, beautiful performance in the future. Basic technique is something that many "*advanced*" dancers consider boring to spend their time on. They think: "What for? I already know how to do shimmy! Let me do something more complicated". At the same time, they wonder why their shimmy doesn't look as good as on the videos of professional dancers. You may know how to do maya, but repeating maya again and again is not about learning the mechanics of the movement. It's about increasing the range of the motion, hence stretching your side hip muscles. That in turn will enhance the fluidity and volume of absolutely all hip movements. Drilling shimmies is not about repeating how the movement is done. It is about training your body to relax your muscles, and engage only the necessary parts. It's about training controlled but relaxed coordination. You can continue this logic with absolutely any of the basic belly dance movements.



- **Accept two simple concepts:** IT'S ALL ABOUT POSTPONED REWARD and PROGRESS IS ACCUMULATIVE. I often tell members of the Iana Dance Club a story about a stone-worker. He hits a stone with his hammer. Nothing happens. He does it again. Nothing. He keeps going. Five, ten hits. People around start making fun of him. "Why would he do it?" But he just keeps going. 20, 50, 70 times. The stone doesn't even have a scratch. 99... Then he hits it for the 100th time, and the stone suddenly breaks into two pieces. Goal achieved. Was it that magical 100th hit? No. Of course, not. It would never work without those previous 99 strokes that changed something inside that stone. The stone-worker HAD to do those 99 seemingly 'useless' hits because progress is cumulative, and reward is often postponed. It is the same with your dance practice: if you SHOW UP AND DO THE WORK, progress will happen, even if you don't see it with your eyes... yet.
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Now, let's get to practical tips:

- **Don't think that working on choreography is the same as working on your technique.** For instance, you are working on a new choreo. Suddenly you realize that your shimmy/belly flutters/arabesque isn't good enough for what you want to do. You immediately stop choreographing, and start trying to fix the technique. Then you get frustrated with both: your technique and your unfinished choreo, and you simply quit or postpone. Both processes are important, and both deserve their own time!!! So choose when and what you are doing, and resist the temptation of mixing those tasks.
- **Create a structure for your training session.** Are you gonna work on a new choreo? Polish existing routines? Drill technique? A simple example can be: the first 15 mins I work on loosening up my shimmy, then 30 mins to rehearse for an upcoming show, and then the last 15 mins for a nice backbend stretch. Or whatever your current focus is. Choose between 1 to maximum 3 tasks for each session depending on how much time you have available, but plan it in advance. This way you don't waste neither time nor your decision-making energy, but invest them directly into improving your dance.



- **Start your warm up by reviewing basics.** As I said earlier, you may know how to do a maya, but repeating it again and again is about increasing the range of your motion, and stretching your side hip muscles. Drilling shimmies is about training controlled but relaxed coordination. Additionally, the better your basic moves are, the easier it is to do complicated ones.
- **Just going through the motion won't do the trick.** It can even enhance existing mistakes if you keep repeating them again and again. You need to drill your technique smartly and consciously, understanding your main limitations and how to improve them. Pause and start asking yourself questions: What EXACTLY doesn't work on my turns? Why EXACTLY do I lose balance? Where EXACTLY is my weight distribution? What EXACTLY happens with my arms? Do they help me, or make me struggle more? How can I solve these problems? The same applies to movements you are already comfortable with: how can I enhance my maya? How fast can I go with my ommies? How long can I shimmy before my muscles tense?
- **Working on technique doesn't need to be long.** You can do it even in less than 20 minutes. Give up on long exhausting training sessions, but rather focus on short AND consistent ones. You can fit training into your daily routine even if you only have 5 minutes and 1 square meter to practice on (and everyone does have these). For instance, how about dedicating a few minutes in the morning, right after you brush your teeth, to work on your shimmies? You don't even need to leave the bathroom to do it! What a beautiful way to wake your body up while improving your dance technique. And doing such 5-min practice will improve your shimmies much faster than scheduling a 2-hour session once per month, and being extremely bored during that practice.
- **Focus on consistency rather than immediate results.** Remember, it's all about postponed results and accumulative progress. Come up with your own reward system to encourage yourself. For instance, celebrate 10 days of consistent shimmy practice with a new cute hip scarf, or one month of regular stretching with a spa salon visit, etc.
- **Engage with online resources.** You'll be surprised how much easier it is to follow someone else's instructions rather than rely on your own decision and self-discipline. But in your case, give priority to video classes that not just explain how to do a movement, but actually drill technique together with you, so that you feel you are accompanied throughout your practice time.



- **It's ok if you don't like it.** It's normal to be bored while doing repetitive exercises. Be creative. Think how you can add some element of fun to it. For example, I like listening to podcasts during my cardio on bicycle or treadmill. It helps time fly by more quickly. You may want to listen to your favorite music playlist (just be careful not to be carried away and start dancing around, lol). You can also do your shimmy or stretching practice while watching a movie. Certain movements don't require your full concentration, and you can entertain your mind with something more engaging.
- **Add supportive training beyond dance.** Did you notice that all professional athletes focus not only on their main sport activities, but also spend a lot of time in the gym? Well, professional dancers are partially athletes too, so let's figure out what additional activities may help you improve your technique. Conditioning includes three physical components: strengthening your muscles, developing cardio, and, of course, stretching. All three components are equally important, and proper balance is crucial. Even if you are not aiming to become a professional dancer, well-developed and balanced muscles will be more receptive for learning and enhancing belly dance technique.
- **Work on possible emotional blocks.** It's not only about working on your physical body. With dance you have to face your deeper emotions, those that you've stored in your body for years. Any suppressed anger, any unhealed emotional trauma, any unresolved conflict, or constant guilt and anxiety... they all leave marks in our body: tensed shoulders, painful hip joints, tendency for frequent injuries. It shapes our muscles. Someone can't get shimmies for a while, but maybe their arm work is fluid and mesmerizing. Another person may not experience any difficulties with shimmies, but their chest area is extremely tense. Have you ever considered why the same muscles respond differently in different people even though they do the same movement? Of course, there is an obvious biological factor about various body structures, but also there is an additional layer of emotional baggage that we all carry with us... It's all there, inside your body, and as a dancer you deal with it all the time, regardless if you realize it or not.

I hope you got inspired with some of the suggestions! Don't try to implement them all at once. Choose one or two that spoke to you the most, and implement them right now. Then in a month add one or two more, and so on. Gradual change has more chances for success, but your commitment needs to be consistent. Good luck with it!



## ACTION-STEPS REVIEW:

- **Don't think that working on choreography is the same as working on your technique.**
- **Create a structure for your training session.** Choose between 1 to maximum 3 tasks for each session depending on how much time you have available.
- **Start your warm up by reviewing basics.** You may know how to do a maya, but repeating it again and again is about increasing the range of your motion, stretching your side hip muscles, etc.
- **Just going through the motion won't do the trick.** You need to drill your technique smartly and consciously.
- **Working on technique doesn't need to be long.** You can fit training into your daily routine even if you have only 5 minutes and 1 square meter to practice on.
- **Focus on consistency rather than immediate results.** Come up with your own reward system to encourage yourself.
- **It's ok if you don't like it.** Certain movements don't require your full concentration, and you can entertain your mind with something more engaging.
- **Engage with online resources.** Give priority to video classes that not just explain how to do a movement, but actually drill technique together with you, so that you feel you are accompanied throughout your practice time.
- **Do supportive training.** Conditioning includes three physical components: strengthening your muscles, developing cardio, and, of course, stretching.
- **Work on possible emotional blocks.** Any suppressed anger, any unhealed emotional trauma, any unresolved conflict, or constant guilt and anxiety... The same muscles respond differently in different people even though they do the same movement due to obvious biological factors, but also because of an additional layer of emotional baggage that we all carry with us.

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## SUGGESTED BOOK:

“Outliers” by Malcolm Gladwell. Throughout his book, the author repeatedly refers to the “10 000-hour rule,” asserting that the key to achieving true expertise in any skill is simply a matter of practicing.

## RELATED EPISODES OF THE BELLY DANCE LIFE PODCAST:

[Ep 271. Hayal: Functional Training For Belly Dancers](#)

[Ep 211. Jasirah: How to Find New Business Ideas as a Dancer](#)

[Ep 105. Nabila: It's Never Too Late to Start and Succeed](#)

[Ep 56. Daliya: Improve Your Dance Every Day](#)

[Ep 19. Jasirah: How to Practice on Your Own. Tips & Tricks](#)

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## SUGGESTED ARTICLES:

[Checkpoints For Successful Knee Shimmy](#)

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE IANA DANCE CLUB MEMBERS:

[The Iana Dance Club](#) is an online platform that offers 300+ video tutorials in the format of 20-min technique drills, choreography breakdowns, 3 to 10-week intensives, and in-depth full-length courses. If you are not a member of the club, you can join it for a 7-day free trial, and explore all the tools available there.

- If you're ever in doubt with how to perform any movement, check the **course Learn How to Belly Dance: Complete Guide from A to Z**. As a member, you have free access to it inside the Iana Dance Club.
- We also have plenty of **3 to 5-week intensives dedicated to drilling and polishing technique**. They are designed in a fun and engaging way, so you never get bored, and *I do the drilling part along with you*. Check out these intensives:

- Elegant Arabesque
- Vibration Shimmy
- Exercises For Feet
- Belly Rolls & Flutters
- Turns
- Chest Isolation
- Egyptian Knee Shimmy
- Fluid Arms
- Hips Shimmy



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**Club**



## SHARE YOUR PROGRESS:

I hope you've enjoyed this quiz, and found these suggestions useful and inspiring. You can save this pdf with all tips, and refer to it throughout the year to refresh ideas. Consider retaking this quiz after you implement all of the suggestions above, because you may need to shift your focus to other areas as your dance journey unfolds. Don't forget to share the quiz with your friends, and use hashtag #bellydancehabits to share about your training progress. Follow me on Instagram (@iana\_dance) for more tips on habits, training and all aspects of your belly dance life.



[www.ianadanceClub.com/quiz](http://www.ianadanceClub.com/quiz)

